

REMARKS

The outstanding Official Action urges that there are two patentably distinct inventions claimed in the present application. Applicants elect the Group I invention drawn to a method and including claims 1-27. The election is made without traverse and Applicants have canceled the claims related to the Group II invention without prejudice or disclaimer and subject to the right to file a divisional application directed to the non-elected invention.

Applicants most respectfully submit that the application is now in condition for an examination on the merits noting the Information Disclosure Statements filed which include the International Search Report.

The file has been reviewed and it is noted that there is a claim for priority. Acknowledgment of the claim for priority and receipt of the priority document in the next Official Action is in order and is most respectfully requested.

Applicants also note that formal drawings have been submitted and confirmation that the drawings in the application are acceptable is also requested in the next Official Action.

In view of the above comments and election of the Group I invention, an early and favorable action on the merits is now believed to be in order and is most respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
BACON & THOMAS, PLLC

By: Richard E. Fichter
Richard E. Fichter
Registration No. 26,382

625 Slaters Lane, 4th Fl.
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Phone: (703) 683-0500
Facsimile: (703) 683-1080

REF:kdd
A01.wpd

July 24, 2002